

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Planning Committee: 2 August 2011

DC11/100: Proposed Change of Use of Vacant Retail Unit to Dental Surgery, 146 Main Street, Alexandria by Lynsey Courtney

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1** This application relates to a property in which the Council has an ownership interest. Under the terms of the approved scheme of delegation it therefore requires to be determined by the Planning Committee.

2. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 2.1** The application relates to a vacant shop unit within Alexandria Town Centre. The unit is part of a row of 1970s style two storey commercial units which are in use as shops and other businesses, with the upper floors mainly being used for storage. The application premises have been vacant for several months and were last used as an amusement arcade. The site is located on the western side of the Main Street and neighbouring the site to the south, east and north are a mixture of retail units, hot food takeaways, offices and other commercial properties. To the west (rear) of the site there is a public car park. There is an existing dental surgery located within the same row of shops, at 162 Main Street.
- 2.3** Planning permission is sought for a change of use from an amusement arcade to a dental surgery (Use Class 2). There would be two separate surgery rooms and a waiting area/reception on the ground floor with the upper floor being used for ancillary storage and also a decontamination room for cleaning dental equipment. There are no proposals for any external alterations to the frontage or rear of the unit.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1** West Dunbartonshire Council Roads Services have no objections to this proposal.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1** None.

5. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010

- 5.1** The site lies within Alexandria Town Centre, and Policy RET5 states that applications for non-retail uses, particularly where they involve the re-use of vacant upper floors, will be favourably considered where they contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre and do not conflict with other local plan policies. A dental surgery is considered to be an appropriate use for a town centre location as it would involve a significant number of visits by members of the public. Since the premises were last used as an amusement centre there would be no loss of existing retail space, and the re-use of the property after a period of being vacant would enhance the location. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy RET5.

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Scottish Planning Policy

- 6.1** The Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) supports the provision of a mixture of uses and activities within town centres, to be achieved by encouraging retail and other commercial uses in town centre locations. Such uses will add to the vitality and viability of the centre. The creation of a dental surgery can add to the area in terms of additional footfall and contribute to improving the economy. The proposed use is therefore considered to be consistent with the principles of the SPP.

Appearance and Vitality

- 6.2** The premises have been vacant for several months, and it is desirable that they are brought back into appropriate use in order to avoid the premises becoming unsightly. A dental surgery would provide additional health services within the local community, and would generate a significant number of visitors who may also patronise local shops. The surrounding area includes a mixture of commercial uses and it is considered that a dental surgery would not conflict with any of these. Whilst there is no dedicated parking for this site, it occupies an easily accessible town centre location and there is a large public car park to the rear.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1** The proposal would bring a vacant unit back into use and would complement the existing uses within a mixed area of the town centre. It would help to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre and is therefore supported by local planning policies.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1** **Grant** planning permission subject to conditions set out in Section 9 below.

9. CONDITIONS

01. The development hereby approved shall commence within a period of 3 years from the date of this decision notice.
02. The developer shall submit to the Planning Authority in writing upon the forms specified for the purpose and attached to this decision notice:
 - a) A Notice of Commencement of Development as soon as practicable once it is decided to commence the development hereby approved (which shall be prior to the development commencing);
 - b) A Notice of Completion of Development as soon as practicable once the development has been completed.

Elaine Melrose
Executive Director of Housing, Environmental
and Economic Development
Date: 19 July 2011

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Appendix: None.

Background Papers:

1. Planning application and plans.
2. Consultation responses.
3. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010.

Wards affected: Leven